

Stakeholder Assessment Summary: July to December 2007

SR 302 – Establish New Corridor ■ WSDOT Olympic Region ■ December 2007

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December 2007

This document should be cited as:

Jones & Stokes. 2007. Stakeholder Assessment Summary: July to December 2007. SR 302 – Establish New Corridor.
December.

(J&S 00877.07). Olympia, WA. Prepared for WSDOT Olympic Region.

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Introduction

In July 2007 the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) initiated the State Route 302 (SR 302) Corridor Study to evaluate the environmental impacts of creating a new corridor or widening SR 302 to improve mobility and enhance motorist safety. The end result will be development of a preferred transportation alternative and completion of the environmental documentation.

The first step in the process is to evaluate the baseline corridor conditions. This includes studying traffic volumes and collision history, as well as the existing environmental conditions. Another important element is to understand the community's use of the roadway, safety concerns, potential impacts of corridor improvements, and the community's preferred methods for obtaining information and participating throughout the study.

The opinions of the Key Peninsula community and those who depend on the route are a fundamental part of the study and environmental process. WSDOT expects to spend three years to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). During this time, it will be important to keep the community informed of all steps in the process including information about the range of alternatives, preferred alternative selection and implementation of improvements, including possible short-term safety enhancements. WSDOT is committed to an open and transparent process that keeps the community informed of study progress, considers community input at key project decision-making points and utilizes a variety of tools to reach different community audiences.

Report Organization

This summary is organized into six sections:

- Stakeholder Assessment Objectives
- Approach
- Interview and Briefing Format
- Key Findings
- Detailed Responses
- Recommendations

In addition, the summary includes the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Community Research Stakeholder Database
- Appendix B: List of Stakeholder Interviews and Briefings: July to December 2007
- Appendix C: Key Peninsula Community Fair Comments: July 2007
- Appendix D: Stakeholder Interview Questionnaire

Stakeholder Assessment Objectives

The stakeholder assessment was designed to capture the interests and concerns of the community and identify the best methods for positive dialogue throughout the process. Objectives included:

- Identifying and understanding community issues: specific “trouble spots” along the roadway;
- Understanding travel behavior: how the community currently uses the SR 302 corridor and changes in travel behavior as a result of increased traffic and safety concerns;
- Evaluating the best ways to engage and communicate with the public: identification of groups representative of the larger population that might be used for briefings and more efficient information sharing;
- Assessing and responding to stakeholders’ need for information to promote project understanding;
- Creating opportunities for two-way communication: use of diverse meeting formats such as open houses, public meetings and small group interaction;
- Coordinating involvement of outside jurisdictions and agencies: informal interaction between members of the project team and their staff-level agency counterparts as well as more formal agency coordination with decision-makers; and
- Informing development of a comprehensive, proactive EIS public involvement program that can be evaluated and revised as needed to respond to emerging issues.

Approach

The assessment included three key components: 1) identifying community stakeholders, individuals and groups and interviewing them about corridor-related issues and concerns; 2) providing briefings—short presentations about the project—to community groups; and 3) researching regional media, public meeting locations, community organization newsletters, businesses willing to display project posters and other effective ways to inform and engage community members. This community research resulted in the development of a comprehensive stakeholder database (see Appendix A), including direct mail and electronic mail contacts and information about newsletter and media deadlines.

The project team met with 38 individuals and groups between July and December 2007 (see Appendix B). A few project briefings may continue in early 2008 as additional stakeholder groups are identified and to provide updated project information. The assessment involved community residents of the Key Peninsula who use SR 302 daily as well as those who use SR 302 but come from outside the Key Peninsula including Mason County, Gig Harbor and Tacoma. Starting with the July 2007 Key Peninsula Community Fair, the project team reached out to a variety of community, neighborhood and stakeholder groups including Tribal governments, utility and emergency service providers, transit providers, the city of Gig Harbor, Mason and Pierce counties, Key Peninsula Community Council, Key Peninsula Metropolitan Parks, Longbranch

and Victor improvement clubs, local seniors, Key Peninsula schools, local historical society, local businesses, and community groups in geographical areas including Burley and Lake Holiday.

All comments were synthesized in this summary and will continue to inform the stakeholder and public involvement undertaken throughout the study process. All comments have been documented in the project record, reviewed by the project team and made available to the public on the project Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr302/newcorridor.

Interview and Briefing Format

In July 2007 WSDOT sponsored a booth at the Key Peninsula Community Fair and asked community members to complete a short comment card and note comments on large aerial maps of the community. The team spoke with many community members about their concerns regarding SR 302, how often they travel on the corridor, and what community organizations WSDOT should contact for more information. Based on that initial feedback (see Appendix C), the team developed a preliminary contact list and stakeholder questionnaire (see Appendix D) that focused on the following key topics:

- Concerns and issues about SR 302;
- Knowledge of past studies related to SR 302;
- Potential solutions for addressing safety along SR 302;
- Challenges faced by WSDOT in completing the study;
- Best methods to involve the community in the process;
- Best ways to communicate with residents about study progress and events; and
- Other stakeholders that the project team should consult.

The questionnaire was used for small group and one-on-one interviews and more informally during the community briefings. The majority of stakeholders contacted were agreeable to, and interested in, sharing their input. Interviews were held in person, except for a few cases where it was not possible due to schedule conflicts. Two project team members typically participated in the interviews. For meetings with large community groups or agency staff, the team conducted “briefings” which involved a project overview, current outreach updates and a question and answer session. Each briefing and interview lasted approximately one hour. A total of 38 interviews and briefings were conducted (see Appendix D for a list of interviews and briefings).

Key Findings

The following key concerns emerged from the stakeholder interviews and briefings:

There are numerous safety concerns along the corridor.

Limited sight distance, lack of shoulders and steep banks throughout the corridor are a concern of many. Intersection functionality and safety are also major concerns, particularly at SR 302/118th, SR 302/SR 16, SR 302/Purdy Drive NW and SR 302/SR 3. Many noted the difficulty of safely accessing driveways, side roads and businesses along SR 302 and near the Purdy Bridge. One interviewee told the team about a bumper sticker that reads, “Pray for me, I drive SR 302.”

Congestion has increased significantly.

In the last five years morning and evening congestion has greatly increased on the Purdy Bridge and at the intersections of SR 302/SR 16 and SR 302/Purdy Drive NW. One interviewee said, “I’ve got three words for you: traffic, traffic, traffic.”

Focus roadway improvements on the eastern half of SR 302.

Many stakeholders pointed out that the majority of the congestion and safety issues are concentrated between Purdy and the signalized intersection of SR 302/Elgin-Clifton Road and Key Peninsula Highway. Once you arrive at Key Peninsula Highway or head northwest toward Allyn and Belfair, the traffic decreases rapidly and the roadway begins to feel more rural. “Focus on the area between Lake Kathryn and Purdy and avoid the environmental affects of building a new road on 144th. There is no traffic out there, so no need for a new road.”

Immediate spot fixes are supported but not at the cost of a larger solution.

It will be some time before a project alignment is identified and longer still for funding determinations and construction. Funding and construction will likely occur in phases, which could take many years. In the meantime, there are several safety “spot fixes” that could be completed. In general, most interviewees agreed that shorter-term improvements would help alleviate some immediate safety and congestion concerns, but they were quick to say that a comprehensive, long-term solution is vitally important to the community. In the near term, interviewees recommended WSDOT focus on high accident intersections such as SR 302/118th, SR 302/SR 16, SR 302/Purdy Drive NW. One community member put it simply, “All the problems are generated between Lake Kathryn and the intersection of Purdy Bridge and Purdy Drive NW. Fix that section first..”

One of WSDOT’s biggest challenges to improving SR 302 will be follow-through. In addition, there are concerns about funding and timely construction.

Many stakeholders questioned the need for yet another study and expressed skepticism about the agency’s ability to efficiently plan and construct needed improvements. They wondered why it was not completed in 1993 and what is different today that will result in a different outcome. Some noted they will “believe it when they see it.”

Some stakeholders mentioned that it might be difficult for WSDOT to garner community trust as a result of lack of follow through from the 1993 study and from other projects. This includes being “unheard” through the decision-making process for the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge construction and feeling somewhat neglected from regional priorities and decision-making.

The community is also concerned about WSDOT’s ability to secure funding for corridor improvements and the amount of time necessary for construction. Many questioned why it has taken WSDOT so long to improve SR 302. “We need improvements right away; three years is too long to wait.” Others noted the long process experienced with the Belfair Bypass in Mason County and the increased costs associated with the drawn out project.

Community residents want to be involved and require a variety of methods to keep informed.

Many stakeholders interviewed expressed appreciation at being contacted and asked for their personal views about SR 302. They noted that effective communication would be necessary with all Key Peninsula residents as well as those who travel through the area from other counties. There are numerous community organizations and a well-established network of individuals engaged in civic activities. Word-of-mouth was cited as a good way to share information but would require the dissemination of clear and consistent messages from the project team to individuals and groups throughout the community to get the word out. Stakeholders said they want to be informed and noted, “The more WSDOT talks with the community, the better received the project will be.”

A stakeholder advisory committee could be a useful tool for guiding this project.

Some stakeholders thought an advisory committee would be a good tool for this project. Others expressed what they described as “meeting fatigue” from the extensive outreach conducted for recent development of the Key Peninsula Community Plan. Other stakeholders wondered if this project might be efficiently advised through an existing stakeholder group such as the Key Peninsula Community Council.

Key Peninsula residents feel unheard and unrepresented in regional decisions.

Many stakeholders cited the decision to build and toll the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge as an example of the lack of responsiveness to Key Peninsula needs. Others expressed a general lack of trust and skepticism with the transportation agency, and expressed some apathy; that WSDOT “will do what it wants” regardless of community input.

Project will become controversial once recommended improvements are identified.

Stakeholders noted that WSDOT faces a significant challenge later in the process, when a decision is made about a preferred alignment or set of roadway improvements. Some wondered about the decision-making process for choosing a recommended alignment. They expressed their concern that the recommended roadway alignment will cause direct community impacts, will result in emotional reactions from neighborhoods that are most directly affected and could pit community members against their neighbors.

Detailed Responses

The following detailed stakeholder responses are organized by topic, generally based on the interview questionnaire. Comments have been organized to identify common themes and include references regarding specific roadway segments. No comments are directly attributed to specific individuals or organizations.

Key Concerns about SR 302

When asked about existing conditions along SR 302, interviewees shared a wealth of concerns including overall corridor safety, congestion, the lack of follow through since the 1993 Corridor Study, environmental impacts of new corridor improvements, land use, population growth, and the need for safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Following are the key themes:

Corridor Study Process

Many interviewees noted that improvements are needed right away and that there has been no follow through from the 1993 study. Others questioned whether minor roadway improvements will be delayed and whether this study will impact the Burley/Olalla interchange project currently planned for construction.

Environmental Impacts

Many expressed concern about the fault line and slide area near Victor and Rocky Point. Others are concerned about impacts to water resources and habitat (e.g., additional runoff) in Burley Lagoon, wetlands, creeks and lakes caused by any alternative, especially the 144th alignment.

Land Use and Population Growth

The 2025 population projection for the Pierce County portion of Key Peninsula is 25,000. Accommodating growth is a key issue among those interviewed. Some said that WSDOT must consider existing traffic generators such as the new 30-acre high school site and a 360-acre/4,000-seat equestrian facility (DNR property) that may be developed on Key Peninsula. They noted that WSDOT must consider traffic generators like the new hospital near Borgen Blvd in Gig Harbor.

Mobility

Heavy congestion on the Purdy Bridge and at the intersections of SR 302/Purdy Drive NW, SR 302/118th and SR 16 exit to Purdy/SR 302 were the main concerns of all those interviewed. Many feel that SR 16 traffic congestion has improved since the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge opened; yet others think the new bridge has pushed the backups more quickly to Purdy. Some have noticed an increase in cut-through residential, commuter and delivery traffic on SR 302. There seems to be more traffic on SR 3, in Mason County, because people want to avoid the toll at the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Some mentioned the lack of transportation for seniors and young people on Key Peninsula. A few reminded the team that the Purdy Park and Ride is over capacity.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Interviewees emphasized the lack of, and need for, safe sidewalks, paths and bicycle lanes.

Safety

All interviewees agreed: safety is the number one concern. The lack of shoulders, passing lanes, and turnout space for emergency vehicles and buses creates unsafe conditions throughout the SR 302 corridor. Many expressed concern about poor visibility, and difficulty accessing driveways, side roads and businesses along SR 302. Other key concerns included the lack of speed limit enforcement, cars parked along the narrow section of SR 302 along the Purdy Spit and overhanging trees in the Wauna curves section. Interviewees identified specific areas along SR 302 that are particularly dangerous:

- SR 302/118th intersection
- SR 16 exit to Purdy/SR 302
- SR 302/ Purdy Drive NW intersection
- SR 3/SR 302 intersection near Allyn
- Purdy Bridge
- Wauna curves

Familiarity with 1993 SR 302 Corridor Study

The majority of interviewees were not familiar with the 1993 study. However, when prompted with a description of the alternatives identified in the 1993 study, many seemed to recall hearing about different roadway alternatives. Some called to mind the Pine/Spruce connection to SR 16; others recalled something about the 144th “power line” road alignment.

Solutions to Improving SR 302

94th and 118th

Many recommended new traffic signals (with designated turn lane) at the dangerous intersections of SR 302/94th and SR 302/118th. Interviewees emphasized the dangerous circumstances at SR 302/118th. Drivers traveling westbound on SR 302 stop to make the left turn across traffic. Many collisions occur there because people don’t have time to stop or don’t have shoulder room to avoid the lineup. Some also recommended a new traffic signal at the intersection of 118th/Wright Bliss, pointing out that crossing traffic is difficult and dangerous at that location. Some added that rumble strips on 118th would improve safety on that roadway.

144th

The 144th roadway sparked a great deal of discussion among the interviewees. The project team heard disparate viewpoints and gathered many suggestions. Many think that a new 144th alignment makes the most sense because the right-of-way already exists (though it would need improvement) and Tacoma Power owns it, which might make acquisition easier. Others argued that an alignment too far north of Burley Lagoon would defeat the purpose of relieving SR 302 congestion because people won’t be willing to drive too far out of their way. Many discussed the abundant wetlands, creeks, lakes and fish habitat that would be impacted by a 144th alignment. The following represents interviewee recommendations:

- All the safety and congestion problems occur between Lake Kathryn and Purdy. WSDOT should focus on identifying solutions there.
- Consider environmental and water resource impacts of 144th alignment. There is no population to support 144th west of Key Center.
- Connect 144th corridor to new bridge or overpass directly across Burley Lagoon (remove Purdy Bridge).
- Connect 144th corridor to new bridge or overpass at north end of Burley Lagoon.
- Connect 144th corridor eastbound to SR 16 and westbound to SR 302 near Allyn.
- Consider interchange at 144th, with or without connection to SR 16.
- Consider one-way on 144th and second one-way on another road (e.g., Pine).
- Create direct alignment across existing 144th right-of-way by placing overpass at Spruce or Pine instead of Burley/Olalla.
- Those using Borgen Blvd to exit Peacock Hill would likely use 144th if they could.

Belfair

Some interviewees shared their preference for the 1993 study alternatives R2 (running through Kitsap County between SE Pine Road/118th Ave N and SR 302 near Allyn) and R3 (extending from SE Pine Road/118th Ave N to SE Burley-Olalla Road) with a Belfair Bypass connection. One interviewee felt that the Belfair Bypass is the priority, not SR 302. Another mentioned that if WSDOT improves SR 302, more people from Belfair would use it.

Burley/Olalla

Interviewees said that the Burley/Olalla interchange is too far north to improve mobility. Some questioned why WSDOT is spending millions on a new interchange at Burley/Olalla instead of Pine. A SE Spruce Road or SE Pine Road connection to SR 302 seems like the most logical option.

Corridor Study Process

The majority of interviews simply want WSDOT to follow through on the commitment to improve SR 302. Many suggested that WSDOT consider the recently completed Key Peninsula Community Plan when analyzing SR 302 alternatives and incorporate as many design concepts as possible. Others recommended that WSDOT:

- Coordinate SR 302 improvements with other roadway improvements (e.g., traffic signals).
- Incorporate context sensitive design elements.
- Consider community values when designing SR 302 improvements.
- Consider Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District's future "360" plans when analyzing corridor improvements.
- Work with tribes to secure more funding for roads.
- Tie outcomes with the EIS findings and guarantee something when the EIS is complete.

Key Center

One interviewee recommended that WSDOT install a traffic signal at the intersection of Key Peninsula Highway/92nd Street in Key Center. Another suggested that the agency identify other choke points and level of traffic demand in Key Center.

Passing and Turnout Lanes

The need for passing lanes, turn lanes and shoulders along SR 302 (especially in the Wauna curves section) was mentioned by many, though many others said they would be opposed to roadway widening. A few people recommended that WSDOT place more signage to help direct drivers to SR 3. Many drive past the signal not realizing it's the only route from Key Peninsula to Allyn and Shelton. One interviewee felt that the 40 mph speed limit along SR 302 seemed about right with so many driveways and side roads, but others recommended increasing the SR 302 speed limit to 50 mph.

Pedestrian, Bicycle and Park & Ride Facilities

Interviewees recommended that designated pedestrian and bicycle facilities be added in order to improve corridor safety. Some suggested widening the existing Purdy Bridge pedestrian walkway. Some recommended redeveloping the Wauna curves as walking trails or creating a regional non-motorized trail facility and connection through Key Peninsula. One interviewee mentioned that the Forever Green Council is creating a trail system throughout Pierce County and recommended that WSDOT extend the Cushman Trail through Purdy along SR 302. If a future intersection at SR 302/SR 16 is proposed, some suggested building a Park and Ride at that location or along SR 302 near Lake Kathryn.

Pine and Spruce

If WSDOT considers an alternative to the north (e.g., Pine or Spruce), some pointed out that at least four extra trip miles would be added for those who simply want to cross the Purdy Bridge. "The farther north you place it, the less useful it will be," was commonly heard. Some interviewees were under the impression that WSDOT had already appropriated money to reroute SR 302 from 118th to Spruce or Pine and make improvements to the Wauna curves. Another common perception among some community members was that the Pine alternative was promised to the community as the recommended solution after the 1993 Study. One interviewee said the community consensus (during the 1993 study) held that the Pine connection was the most feasible because it is near the Purdy Bridge/SR 302 intersection, yet north of Burley Lagoon. Some felt that Pine or Spruce would make a good connection between SR 302 and SR 16. Another suggested developing Pine as new alignment first, then making spot improvements (e.g., shoulder widening) to SR 302. One interviewee wondered whether it was too late to build another interchange at Pine or Spruce instead of Burley/Olalla.

Purdy Bridge / Purdy Drive NW / Purdy Bridge Intersection

A common thread running through the interviews was the immediate need for improvements in the section between Lake Kathryn, the Purdy Bridge and Purdy Drive NW. Nearly all interviewees agreed that Purdy is the key to improving safety and relieving congestion on SR

302. Many pointed out that the majority of traffic flowing to and from the Key Peninsula comes from Gig Harbor and Tacoma and the worst congestion occurs in Purdy; therefore, many recommended that WSDOT avoid building a new roadway too far north of Burley Lagoon. People will not want to travel out of their way. Specific recommendations include:

- Consider a new bridge above Purdy Drive NW, Purdy Spit and Burley Lagoon that reconnects to SR 302 beyond Wauna curves, straightening out the roadway.
- Consider a new bridge above Purdy Spit, Burley Lagoon and Purdy Drive NW with a roadway that connects to SR 16.
- Develop Purdy Spit as a state park.
- Maintain public recreational access to the water and beach near Purdy Spit.
- Add a roundabout at Purdy.
- Provide a center-turning lane in Wauna curves area.
- Add another lane on Purdy Drive NW near the school to accommodate traffic.
- Restrict left-turn access from bridge to shopping center (before Purdy Drive NW signal).

Rural Character

Some felt that widening SR 302 along the Purdy Spit would destroy the rural character of the area. Many recommended WSDOT maintain Key Peninsula Highway as a two-lane road and encourage understanding of residential areas and protection of neighborhoods.

State Route 16 / Burnham Drive

Nearly all stakeholders interviewed recommended that WSDOT address critical safety and congestion issues at the SR 16 exit to Purdy/SR 302. Specific recommendations include:

- Consider an additional lane on SR 16 exit ramp to Purdy/SR 302.
- Consider two lanes on SR 16 northbound to SR 302, with one lane leading off to Goodnough Drive NW.
- Add a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane on SR 16 from Purdy Women's Correctional Facility to 144th.

Pros and Cons of SR 302 Improvements

The key benefits of improving SR 302 are increased safety and mobility. In discussing the potentially adverse impacts, interviewees shared concerns about WSDOT's ability to secure funding and begin construction, the environmental impacts associated with alternatives, and the potential loss of rural character. Some interviewees do not want to encourage growth. Others feel WSDOT should improve safety and mobility in Purdy and add shoulders along SR 302. One interviewee felt these "smaller improvements would address traffic concerns for maybe 20 to 30 years, and then WSDOT wouldn't need the new alternative alignment for another 30 to 50 years."

Biggest Challenges Facing WSDOT

Though there seems to be overwhelming support for SR 302 improvements, many interviewees noted that WSDOT's biggest challenge would be follow-through. Many community members expressed skepticism about the agency's ability to get SR 302 improvement projects funded and constructed, and general mistrust of government. Some expressed lingering frustration about the gas tax and new Tacoma Narrows Bridge: "It was shoved down our throats," Others noted the strong desire of Key Peninsula residents to be involved and have a "say" in what happens in their community. Others stated, "WSDOT may meet some resistance and skepticism based on the 1993 study effort (which of course, didn't result in any construction)." Others mentioned "the challenge of maintaining rural character as the peninsula's population grows and congestion increases." It was noted that people in support of maintaining a rural roadway will oppose signals and streetlights. Some are worried that SR 302 will be turned over to Kitsap or Pierce County if the new alignment sweeps too far north. In that case, roadway improvements would take even longer to complete.

Some stakeholders noted that WSDOT would face a significant challenge in selecting a final roadway alignment. Currently, while all options are under consideration, the project is not generating significant controversy. However, this will change, some noted, once a recommended alignment is identified. "Not in my backyard" will be heard from residents when the process gets close to identifying recommended improvements. Others expected that any recommended alignment would create friction between peninsula neighborhoods.

Biggest Challenges to Improving SR 302

Again, most interviewees noted that the biggest challenge to improving SR 302 would be WSDOT follow-through. Many also expressed skepticism about the agency's ability to secure funding and garner community trust. There may be very little consensus among people regarding the location of new SR 302 alignment. For example, many Wauna homeowners want to retain the trees that form a canopy above SR 302 and may not support road widening. Depending on where they live and where they travel, some stakeholders prefer a more northern route while others prefer a southern route similar to existing roadway. Several shared the comment, "The majority of traffic is headed to Gig Harbor and Tacoma, so many peninsula residents won't want to travel north above Burley Lagoon and farther out of their way." Many interviewees felt that environmental impacts, especially near Purdy Spit and Burley Lagoon will pose a major challenge.

High Priority "Spot Fixes"

Interviewees reminded WSDOT that the Key Peninsula Planning Board recommendations must be considered and incorporated into SR 302 corridor improvements. The community spent a great deal of time formulating their recommendations. While most agreed that short-term spot fixes would help alleviate congestion and improve safety in some areas, all interviewees emphasized the long-awaited need for comprehensive, long-term improvements to SR 302. Specific recommendations include:

- Improve the intersection of Purdy Drive NW / Purdy Bridge.
- Improve congestion at SR 16 exit to SR 302 / Purdy.
- Add an additional lane heading to Purdy from SR 16 to avoid congestion at the bridge.
- Add a right turn lane on east end of Purdy Bridge to alleviate congestion.
- Add shoulders and sidewalks from Purdy Drive NW to Key Peninsula Highway.
- Build a new bridge across Purdy Spit and Burley Lagoon.
- Redevelop businesses at the intersection of Purdy Drive NW and SR 302 as a state park.
- Add a traffic signal in vicinity of 92nd or 94th near Lake Kathryn Village.
- Add a traffic signal at Wright Bliss.
- Build an interchange at 144th.

Residents and Business' Reactions to the SR 302 study

Interviewees were asked how they expected residents and businesses to react to the study. Many said they expect the community to be supportive because most agree that it is a dangerous and congested roadway that needs to be improved. Yet, many of these same stakeholders question the utility of another study given the fact that the 1993 effort did not result in any improvements. Some expected that community members would question why it has taken WSDOT so long to improve SR 302. Overall, most expected that any efforts to improve safety would be welcomed. However, as noted above, a significant challenge will arise when a recommended alignment is proposed and it becomes clear which neighborhoods will be most affected.

Community Knowledge about the SR 302 Corridor Study

The team asked interviewees about their knowledge and familiarity of the SR 302 study. Most agreed that the general public probably does not know much about it and that they were not familiar with it until being approached by members of the project team. Some Key Peninsula residents remember the 1993 study, but are unable to recall specifics about it. Interviewees recommended that WSDOT continue to inform the public about the project process, costs and timelines.

Related Transportation Projects of Interest to Community Members

The team asked interviewees to identify other projects that people will be interested in talking about. Many mentioned the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Interviewees said there was a good deal of apprehension and opposition about the new bridge, yet since it opened, many have noticed an overall improvement in traffic conditions. Some are surprised at how well the bridge is functioning. Still, others remain frustrated that Key Peninsula community members' input about the bridge and tolling was not heeded. Many of these felt that construction of a new bridge was unnecessary. Stakeholders identified the following projects that might be of interest, especially how they might interface with the SR 302 project and any planned improvements:

- Burley/Olalla interchange;
- Burnham Drive/Borgen interchange;

- Belfair Bypass; and
- Some stakeholders noted the recent work of the Key Peninsula Planning Board to develop the draft Key Peninsula Community Plan. It was recommended that WSDOT become familiar with the plan and incorporate appropriate recommendations in the SR 302 Corridor Study.

Best way to communicate about this project with Key Peninsula community

Interviewees expressed appreciation for WSDOT's proactive community outreach and offered suggestions about continued effective communication with stakeholders and local media. In addition, it was noted that when construction begins, WSDOT should be prepared to effectively manage congestion and accessibility for residents and business owners.

Stakeholders recommended that WSDOT advertise public meetings in three key community media outlets including:

- Key Peninsula News;
- Peninsula Gateway; and
- Kitsap Sun.

Others suggestions included:

- North Mason News;
- Mason County Journal; and
- North Bay Review.

In addition, there are numerous community organizations and a well-established network of individuals engaged in civic activities. Word-of-mouth was cited as a good way to share information. Many recommended that WSDOT host public meetings on both the eastern and western end of the peninsula, for example, Purdy and Vaughn or Allyn.

Key Stakeholders Identified

Interviewees and briefing participants were interested in knowing the list of stakeholders being contacted by WSDOT and suggested the following:

- Burnham Drive NW businesses;
- Camp Gallagher, Archdiocese of Seattle;
- Churches;
- Citizens Against Crime;
- Good Roads;
- Grapeview Association;
- Kitsap County Health Department;
- Mason County Fire District #5, Allyn;
- North Mason School District;

- Peninsula School District bus transportation coordinator;
- Pierce County Fire District #5, Gig Harbor;
- Pierce County Health Department;
- Pierce County Public Works, Purdy detachment;
- Port of Bremerton;
- YMCA Camp Coleman, King County;
- YMCA Camp Seymour, Tacoma;
- Key Peninsula Business Association;
- Burley Community Club;
- Key Peninsula Community Center seniors;
- Key Peninsula Civic Association;
- Longbranch Improvement Club;
- Victor Improvement Club; and
- Key Peninsula Community Council.

Usefulness of, and interest in, SR 302 community working group

Many thought the formation of a working group or advisory committee generally a good idea; others were not sure such a group would be necessary. Some noted the many meetings held with the recent Key Peninsula Community Plan process and a sense of “meeting fatigue” in the community. A few suggested use of an existing stakeholder group or organization, such as the Key Peninsula Community Council, to serve as the advisory group.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on numerous discussions with community stakeholders throughout the six-month stakeholder assessment process. The recommendations will inform the development of a continued communication program carried into the environmental assessment phase beginning in January 2008.

Continue proactive community outreach through a variety of communication methods.

- Dissemination of information through broad media is very important, as well as providing venues for the public to interact with project team members to obtain more specific information.
- Many interviewed cited “word of mouth” as an effective way to share information around the Key Peninsula. They noted a variety of sources for obtaining community news including newspapers, direct mail, and email. It seems that once information is communicated through these sources, community members share their concerns openly with their neighbors.

- Based on the participation at the first public event (187 attendees), public meetings are an effective way to communicate specific, detailed and updated project information, as well as provide an opportunity for community members to share their opinions and input directly with project team members. This will continue to be a tool at project milestones.
- In addition, the outreach plan should consider the communication implications of both long- and short-term roadway improvements. These will need to be integrated during the study process and could include other outreach strategies such as:
 - Conducting specific neighborhood outreach for more immediate spot fixes along the roadway; and
 - Communicating clearly and consistently about spot fixes versus a long-term solution.

Consider the formation of a community working group.

- Many Key Peninsula residents are civic-minded and actively engaged in community improvement through the area's many clubs, community groups and organizations. Throughout the outreach process, stakeholders continued to identify groups and individuals for project team briefings and interviews. Interviewing stakeholders and providing project briefings with these groups one-on-one was a constructive way to interact with community members on their "own turf," and provided a valuable foundation for building trust between WSDOT and the community. Due to resource constraints, it may be difficult to continue to meet with all organizations and individuals in this format. A subset of individuals that represent the broad interests of the community could assist WSDOT in continuing a broad outreach program by relying on community liaisons to share information between the community at large and the project team.
- A community working group or advisory committee would not replace the need for larger public meetings or other project events at key milestones, but would serve as a focused place for reviewing and "vetting" study products and decision-making. In order for such a committee to be successful, several factors are recommended:
 - Broad representation of community interests including environmental, business, travelers, residents, etc.;
 - Clear purpose and role of the committee;
 - Rules of engagement including ground rules, decision-making and conflict resolution process; and a
 - Well-defined work program and schedule of meetings.

Be forthright, responsive and accessible to foster community trust.

- Based on the positive response from community members during the stakeholder assessment, there are opportunities for WSDOT to develop a more trusting relationship with Key Peninsula community members. These values should be evident throughout all aspects of the outreach program:
 - Ongoing review and revision of project key messages;

- Anticipation of community questions and concerns in advance of project team interactions with the community;
 - Documentation and responsiveness of community concerns,
 - Clear and plain communication through project materials such as newsletters, meeting announcements, news releases, and project study materials; and
 - Responsiveness to emerging issues with care and concern.
- In addition, development of a clear plan of action—including the integration of public involvement and the environmental process—is a critical tool to help the community understand its role in the process and participate as conveniently as possible.

Appendix A

Community Research Stakeholder Database

Appendix B

Stakeholder Interviews and Briefings: July to December 2007

Stakeholder Briefings

Allyn Community Association
Alta Homeowners Association
Belwood Homeowners Association
Burley Community Club/Library Association
Emerald Shores Homeowners Association
Gig Harbor/Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
Key Peninsula Business Association
Key Peninsula Civic Association
Key Peninsula Community Center Seniors
Key Peninsula Community Council
Key Peninsula Community Fair
Lake Holiday Homeowners Association
Longbranch Improvement Club
Puget Sound Energy
State Senator Derek Kilmer, 26th District
Tribal Governments
Victor Improvement Club
Washington Water Service Company

Stakeholder Interviews

City of Gig Harbor Mayor and staff
Fire District 16
Key Peninsula Community Planning Board (Pierce County staff)
Key Peninsula Historical Society
Key Peninsula Metropolitan Parks District staff and commissioners
Kitsap County staff
Mason County Commissioner and staff
Minterbrook Oyster Company
Peninsula Light Company
Peninsula School Board
Pierce County Councilmember and staff
Pierce County Sheriff, Peninsula Detachment
Pierce Transit
Port of Allyn
South Kitsap Improvement Council
Tacoma Power
Two Waters Arts Alliance
Vaughn Civic Center
Western Oyster Company

Appendix C

Key Peninsula Community Fair Comments: July 2007

Appendix D

Stakeholder Interview Questionnaire